

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:RFOBER,JR.,:JES
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S: BILL TWADDELL
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 132120

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, IN

SUBJECT: THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
VAJPAYEE

1. FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION OF
SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE MAY 31
IN PARIS. SECRETARY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ATHERTON, HORMATS (NSC) AND VAN DYK (AID). VAJPAYEE WAS
JOINED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA AND MEA SECRETARY AHUJA.

2. CIEC -- SECRETARY OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY SUGGESTING
U.S. WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES FOR CONTINUING THE
DIALOGUE ON ENERGY. ONE ALTERNATIVE IS CIEC, ANOTHER IS A
GROUP FOCUSING EXPLICITLY ON ENERGY. REPLYING, MEHTA STRESS-
ED THE DESIRABILITY OF CONTINUING CIEC IN SOME FORM. HE
EXPRESSED DOUBTS THAT GROUP FOCUSING ON ENERGY ALONE WOULD
BE ACCEPTABLE TO OPEC. HE SAW DIFFICULTIES IN OBTAINING
G-77 AGREEMENT FOR CONTINUING CIEC. THE SECRETARY STATED
HE PERSONALLY FAVORED ANOTHER CIEC MINISTERIAL MEETING A
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YEAR FROM NOW. MEHTA APPEALED FOR U.S. FLEXIBILITY ON
ISSUES BEING DISCUSSED AT THE PRESENT CIEC.

3. BILATERAL RELATIONS -- MEHTA STATED THAT THE CLIMATE FOR
BILATERAL RELATIONS HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER. HE EXPRESSED
THE CONVICTION THAT SOME MINOR IRRITANTS CAN BE EASILY RE-

SOLVED. THE SECRETARY NOTED IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO FIRM UP THE DATE FOR THE NEXT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING, AND AUGUST WAS SUGGESTED AS A POSSIBILITY.

4. NUCLEAR -- VAJPAYEE STATED HIS PARTY HAD PREVIOUSLY FAVORED AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR DETERRENT BUT SINCE ITS MERGER INTO THE GOVERNMENT COALITION THIS POSITION HAD BEEN ABANDONED. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS OPPOSED TO DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BUT THERE WAS A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES. VAJPAYEE REVIEWED TARAPUR HISTORY, NOTING THERE WAS A CLEAR U.S. COMMITMENT TO SUPPLY URANIUM. INDIA WAS READY TO TALK, BUT THE MANNER IN WHICH FUEL HAD BEEN WITHHELD RAISED QUESTIONS OF ATTACHING NEW CONDITIONS TO A CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION. MEHTA AND AHUJA WENT ON TO NOTE ELEMENTS OF INDIA'S CONCERN: HOW TO OBTAIN ACCESS TO SUPPLY OF FUELS, AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTES. THEY STRESSED THAT STORAGE IS LIMITED, AND INDIAN NUCLEAR PLANTS MIGHT BE FORCED TO CLOSE DOWN ABSENT SOME SOLUTION. MEHTA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD NUCLEAR DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE ON TWO LEVELS, TECHNICAL AND POLICY. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING NYE IN LONDON TO LEARN HOW WE ENVISAGED PROCEEDING. THE SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THE DESIRABILITY OF BEGINNING DISCUSSIONS PROMPTLY. VAJPAYEE NOTED THAT THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM IS COMPLICATED FOR INDIA BY THE FACT CHINA CONTINUES EXPLOSIONS.

5. INDIAN OCEAN -- THE SECRETARY OUTLINED THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS PRELIMINARY CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS. HE OFFERED HIS ASSURANCES THAT THE U.S. WILL KEEP INDIA IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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FORMED OF THE PROGRESS OF FUTURE DISCUSSIONS. MEHTA STATED THAT INDIA'S VIEWS, AS PART OF NON-ALIGNED WORLD, ARE WELL KNOWN BUT HE COMMENTED THAT THE DETAILS OF DEMILITARIZATION WITH RESPECT TO NAVAL VESSELS ARE "QUITE COMPLEX."

6. COPY OF MEMCON POUCHED TO DELHI. VANCE

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